

The Implications of Mutual Benefit: A Postmodern Analysis of the Civic Engagement Movement in a Neoliberal Order

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The purpose of this article is to explore ways neoliberalism is impacting the advancement of a civic engagement movement in higher education. In this work, I outline a theoretical explanation of how a system of neoliberal governmentality, tied to some conceptions of mutuality, undermines community engagement practice. In the first portion of this article I conceptualize *neoliberalism* and Postmodern understandings of *governmentality*. The theoretical conceptions of neoliberalism and governmentality are used as a theoretical lens to analyze mutuality in community engagement practice. The final portion of the chapter, uses the Postmodern lens to demonstrate how commitments to mutuality can produce and affirm structures of neoliberalism. I give specific analytical attention to the ways funding decisions and grant applications affirm the neoliberal project and undermine the efficacy of a meaningful civic engagement movement.

I. Introduction

University-community partnerships have emerged as the predominant form of community engagement (Janke, 2009). The structural relationship of community engagement situates the way administrators and interested stakeholders think about the practice. Studies typically discuss the best practices of community engagement in terms of reciprocity, mutuality, and sustained commitment between partners (Benson & Harkavy, 2001; CCPH, 1999; Mintz & Hesser, 1996; Points of Light Foundation, 2001; Royer, 1999;). The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching defines *community engagement* as a “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership reciprocity” (2011). In this definition, mutuality describes characteristics of outcomes and transfers between a university-community partnership. In other words, the concept of mutuality is used to indicate when a university-

community partnership creates outcomes and outputs that are mutually beneficial for both partners. This understanding does not consider the ways social structures contribute to defining outputs and outcomes as either being or not being mutually beneficial. Mutuality operates in a neoliberal social, political, and economic order. David Harvey (2005) defined neoliberalism as:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices...Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security or environmental pollution) then they must be created by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. (p. 2)

Not only has neoliberalism reshaped the social, political, and economic order; it has changed the ways universities operate, are organized, and format strategic policy objectives (Giroux, 1999; 2004; 2011; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004) Furthermore, an article in a previous volume of this journal highlighted ways in which reciprocity needed to be reconsidered in response to the emergence of globalization and neoliberalism (Keith, 2005). I delve deeper into the theoretical tradition originally developed by (Keith, 2005), by drawing out the ways neoliberalism is impacting theoretical and practical understandings of mutuality operating within the civic engagement movement.

In February of 2008, a group of scholars and practitioners, associated with the study and practice of civic and community engagement, convened in Dayton, Ohio. The meeting was known as the Kettering Colloquium. The group was charged with determining the state of civic engagement in US higher education. John Saltmarsh, Matt Hartley, and Patti Clayton reported the results of the Kettering Colloquium (Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton, 2009).

The discussion at the Kettering Colloquium were framed by the following question (Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton, 2009):

Why has the civic engagement movement in higher education stalled and what are the strategies needed to further advance institutional transformation aimed at generating democratic, community-based knowledge action? (p. 3) In the white paper Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton synthesize the results of the Kettering Colloquium to illuminate five major impediments that currently limit civic engagement in higher education. The major discussion themes that Saltmarsh, Hartley, and Clayton (2009) reported from the Kettering Colloquium are the following:

- (1) Higher education's perceived obligation to develop civic agency is not high on the public's agenda.
- (2) Our [civic engagement] inadequate conception of what effective democratic education might look like is reflected in the imprecise and even conflicting language by members of the movement.
- (3) The movement is highly fragmented and compartmentalized.
- (4) The movement has largely sidestepped the political dimension of civic engagement.
- (5) The dominant epistemology of the academy runs counter to the civic engagement agenda. (pp. 4-5)

All five of the previously identified points highlight a key limitation to furthering the civic engagement movement in higher education. However, the Kettering Colloquium failed to consider the way neoliberalism and larger social, political, and economic realities are impacting civic engagement in higher education. My research expands upon this discussion by deconstructing the ways the neoliberal order impacts understandings of mutuality. My research provides an additional theoretical explanation of what is limiting the development of the civic engagement movement in higher education.

Using a postmodern theoretical lens, I describe how the civic engagement movement is stunted by commitments to mutuality or mutual benefit that produce and affirm structures of neoliberalism. I ultimately argue that a regime of neoliberal governmentality produce power differentials that undermine larger goals of community and civic engagement. The previously cited concepts will be described in more detail in time.

The normative assumption associated with effective community engagement asserts that negotiated relationships between university-community partners are more likely to produce mutually beneficial outcomes and outputs for all partners involved. However, this normative account of community engagement does not recognize how unconscious and conscious structures govern and define outcomes considered to be mutually beneficial. In other words, no current, theoretical account identifies the structural and social implications of defining community engagement outcomes in terms of mutuality or mutual benefit. The governing structure connected to mutuality creates governed subjects and subjugated. French philosopher, Michel Foucault provides a theoretical account of power that can explain dynamics operating within community engagement relationships.

Power is inherent in all community engagement relationships. Foucauldian understandings of power do not focus upon oppression, disempowerment, or net-loss exchanges between different actors. Instead, according to Foucault, power is everywhere and contextualizes the human experience. From a Foucauldian perspective, tracking a social relationship and claiming that one group of persons has an excess of power when compared with another group of people makes little sense. Instead, the Foucauldian

tradition examines the ways power produces objects of knowledge in relation to other social orders. Michel Foucault (1977/1995) argued that:

we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes,' it 'represses,' it 'censors,' it 'abstracts,' it 'masks,' it 'conceals.' In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production. (p. 194)

In order to move beyond theoretically inadequate accounts of power that inform understandings of mutual benefit, community engagement partnerships and scholars must understand processes that produce the subject and subjugated in university-community partnerships.

Usage of the terms *subject* and *subjugated* in this chapter represents an extension of the work of Michel Foucault. The subject is produced as an object of knowledge, recognized as fitting within or categorized within a social order (Foucault, 1994b, 1970/1966, 2005/1969). The subjugated is produced when agents perform, conduct their behaviors, and attitude in relation to larger social structures (Foucault, 1994b, 1970/1966). Said in another way, the performed behaviors and attitudes of people produce the subjugated. University partners and community members are produced as subjects based upon the categories by which they are labeled. Persons labeled as members of the university create expectations based upon social norms and structures. Likewise, being labeled a community member in a community engagement context creates a whole other set of assumptions based upon social structures and norms. This process of labeling produces the *subject* in the context of community engagement.

Second, depending on the category by which a person is labeled or perceived, a set of ascribed bounds of conduct defines proper behavior for the various members of the

partnership. When produced as an object of knowledge, social structures and norms assert various forms of pressure to perform and conduct behavior in line with larger expectations. In the context of community engagement, humans labeled as university members perform a conduct consistent with the social structures and norms of their respective professions. Alternatively, community members perform roles informed by social structures and norms of the community. The *subjugated* is produced in community engagement by performing within the boundaries of social structures. The categories that are assigned to university representatives and community partners track the production of the subject and the subjugated. All associations, whether affiliated with the community or the university are bound and constructed within dominant social hierarchies. Once a person is identified as being ordered within a particular social structure, they begin to immediately unconsciously and sometimes consciously produce themselves to fit in that order.

Generally, the conscious and unconscious commitments to behaving within prescribed ranges of conduct explain consensus and the status quo that emerges in civil associations. However, the same elements that support group consensus undermine the theoretical objectives of the civic engagement movement. Consensus is often maintained by a tacit acceptance of relationships produced by ordering and classifying groups. Being labeled as a community partner indicates that you are not a university representative and vice versa. These groupings create consensus and tacitly accept status quo. The ordering is based on ideological configurations that structure institutions in society and quell civic engagement movements. Maintaining a successful civic engagement movement presents a challenge because of the manner in which the subject and subjugated are produced. Each entity in the community partnership is “subject to someone else by control and

dependence, and tied to his own identity by conscience and self-knowledge” (Foucault, 1982 p. 212). Community members and university representatives produce themselves according to the social structures and expected behaviors of their ascribed or determined category. The constant production and affirmation of social ordering undermine larger commitments to the civic engagement movement. Maintaining a meaningful civic engagement movement means overcoming deep identity commitments that are tied to social structures and the status quo.

From a postmodern perspective, the parties associated with community engagement are locked into a structure that bounds and guides the range of behavior. Both community partners and university representatives perform along socially prescribed roles, and their attempts to work cooperatively track dominant social expectations of conduct and behavior. From the normative perspective of higher education administration, civic engagement attempts to construct institutions and informal arrangements that account for structures that limit the range of conduct between university and community partners.

Nonetheless, a fundamental challenge of maintaining a civic engagement movement, based upon equality and fair terms, involves overcoming the process that produces the subject and creates the subjugated. Effective community engagement partnerships blur the boundaries between, expert and layperson, expert knowledge and indigenous knowledge, and university and community (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). The community engagement process attempts to maintain positive conceptions of the self by negotiating partnerships along terms of equality, neutrality, and fairness.

Deconstruction refers to a process that highlights and identifies the internal structure or unconscious elements that attach and produce meaning to a concept. In order to complete this objective, the rest of the chapter takes the following form. Part II introduces the general idea of governmentality and begins to connect the theoretical understanding to a practice of community engagement. Part III examines how structures of governmentality support neoliberalism through operations within community engagement. Part IV outlines specific examples of how forms of governmentality produce the neoliberal subject and the subjugated in the context of community engagement. Part V explains how commitments to mutuality in community engagement actually can support structures of governmentality that maintain neoliberalism. Part VI demonstrates how identifying forms of neoliberal governmentality in community engagement can support a more robust commitment to the civic engagement movement and support of the public good.

II. The Concept of Governmentality and Community Engagement

When community engagement administrators and stakeholders discuss power differentials between partners, they are trying to overcome the mechanisms of subject production that prescribe ranges of conduct for each partner in the community engagement relationship. The social structures and social norms that bound the behavior of the subject and the subjugated operate within a web of governmentality. For Foucault, the art of government is not limited to the political institutions associated with the state.

Foucault (1982) argued for a conception of government that includes:

the way in which the conduct of individuals or groups might be directed... It does not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection, but also modes of action, more or less considered and calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others. (p. 221)

Governmentality's outcome seeks to bind and limit the conduct of the self by producing the subject and limit the possible range of conduct by creating the subjugated. Forms of governmentality bound the conduct of university-community partners to fit within the dominant social order. Without acknowledging the social structures and forms of governmentality that order university-community partnerships, establishing a community engagement practice that sustains the civic engagement movement remains impossible. Social structures and social norms produce power relationships that can undermine effective community partnerships within community engagement.

Recognizing that a fundamental part of the community engagement process involves working through social structures sheds light on why the civic engagement movement has stalled. Acknowledging the ways in which levels of social differentiation and order operate allows the community engagement field to understand more clearly the implications of defining partnerships in terms of mutuality.

Humans create conscious and unconscious structures that maintain the status quo. Civil associations based on consensus are maintained because people recognize order as natural and perform within the bounds of social, political, and economic expectations. Performative requirements of human conduct are punished and disciplined in order to return to prescribed bounds of conduct. Systems of governmentality send messages of governance that reinforce and naturalize notions of already knowing the requirements of good citizenship in the liberal state or recognizing the expectations of a party entering a university-community partnership (Foucault, 1978/1991). Foucault's idea of upward continuity connects to the assumption that in order to govern the collective effectively, one must first "govern himself, his goods, and his patrimony, after which he will be successful in

governing the state” (Foucault, 1978/1991 p. 206). Therefore, systems of governmentality in one sphere of life shape and impact conduct in other spheres of life. The forms of governmentality present in community engagement represent an extension of a disciplinary and governing regime, which makes other forms of civil association and general social association possible.

Processes of governmentality dictate, define, and bound collective or common ways of thinking about personal and collective conduct. Although, the process of governmentality bounds behavior at a collective level it also informs individuals’ conduct. Human relationships begin to conform and fit within the bounds of existing structures and discourses of governmentality.

In the context of community engagement, universities attempt to govern themselves in ways that adhere to the best practices and accepted structures of the field. In the field of community engagement, mutual benefit and mutuality has achieved the status of guiding principle. Producing mutually beneficial community partnerships has become the gold standard in community engagement practice. Furthermore, self-governance creates internal standards and external expectations centered on the concept of mutuality. Of course, mutuality can describe community engagement partnerships. In the interest of demonstrating a factor that is limiting the civic engagement movement, the following section begins to tease out the theoretical implications of mutuality in a context of power and neoliberalism.

III. Neoliberal Governmentality in Community Engagement

An earlier section of this chapter has already alluded; neoliberalism refers to a form of capitalism that has significantly affected the contemporary social and political

consciousness. The logics of neoliberalism have become so dominant that they seem natural to the contemporary human condition. However, the success of the neoliberal project depends upon the governing structure that disciplines and produces the subject and subjugated. At the center of the neoliberal turn is a conception of the human condition entirely consumed by the economic sphere (Brown, 2005b, 2006; Foucault, 1994a; Pettit, 1995). An assortment of literature has tracked the ways in which commitments to neoliberalism have altered public and government institutions (Brown, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). As discussed in this article, very little attention has been given to creating a theoretical and empirical explanation of how neoliberalism impacts the civic engagement movement. However, forms of rationality and logics consistent with neoliberalism do not automatically become the dominant organizing principle of the human condition. Forms of neoliberal governmentality operate through a multitude of social structures and social performances. Community engagement can reproduce the logics of neoliberalism through conscious and unconscious commitments to mutuality. A commitment to mutuality has created a structure of governmentality that supports neoliberalism. The commitment to mutuality represents one way community engagement can be employed to affirm structures of neoliberalism.

Dion Dennis (2009) argued that service-learning in the public university supports a neoliberal governmentality. Bringle and Hatcher (1995) defined service-learning as:

A course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students (a) participate in a organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciate of the discipline, and enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (112)

Dennis claims that service-learning, as practiced in his case study, was merely an instrument to justify and legitimate the new role of the neoliberal state. Furthermore, Dennis asserts that that service-learning programs support a governing logic across student populations and community stakeholders that legitimize neoliberal social, political, and economic outcomes. The governing message here describes the neoliberal state as no longer supportive of various social and political institutions. Service-learning curriculum can support and create practices of conduct that legitimate an expanding notion of private spheres of responsibility at the same time limiting public spheres of responsibility. Furthermore, Dennis argued that the underlying message of the service-learning case that he examined was a conception of responsibility that supported the neoliberal project. Dennis argued that the service-learning example he studied sent the governing message that responsibilities once considered to be collective were now considered a private choice motivated by charity. As an outcome of these forms of service, Dennis asserts that universities unintentionally created structures of governmentality that contribute to the myth of individual responsibility, supporting the practice, and guiding the logics of neoliberalism (Lavin, 2008; Bousquet, 2008). From Dennis's perspective, the true, broadly conceived purpose of community engagement involves not promoting an ethic of service or commitment to the public good, or even maintaining historical purposes of the university; rather, the purpose of community engagement involves creating a governing structure that encourages students and stakeholders to claim as individual responsibilities the fulfillment of unmet social and political needs abdicated by the neoliberal state.

Overall, Dennis (2009) provided an interesting critique of one service-learning example, but failed to provide a general theoretical account of how structures of

governmentality can use community engagement to support neoliberalism. Dennis argued correctly that essentialist claims fail to acknowledge how the historical context and arbitrary factors determine levels of responsibility. Nonetheless, Dennis demonstrated the manner in which service-learning can support the myth of neoliberal responsibility in a powerful way. Dennis acknowledges the ways neoliberal governmentalities discipline economic subjects into accepting the outcomes of neoliberalism. However, Dennis's theoretical account falls short in that it fails to discuss or identify a space in community engagement that can sustain a civic engagement movement focused on positive change. Identifying structures of governmentality that produce the neoliberal subject can create a project that promotes the civic engagement movement in community engagement.

IV. The Neoliberal Subject and Community Engagement

As a field, community engagement has failed to recognize how essentialist commitments to mutuality undermine larger strategic goals of the civic engagement movement. It is paramount to identify points at which commitments to mutuality support a regime of neoliberal governmentality and undermine the civic engagement movement. Practices of freedom resist the production of the subject and can be used to maintain conceptions of the self (Foucault, 1994d). Understanding the potential to maintain the self first requires an examination of how the subject replaces the self. This section examines three ways in which understandings of mutuality in community engagement can produce the neoliberal subject. First, I examine how competitive grants produce neoliberal subjects, undermining the efficacy of the civic engagement movement. Secondly, I analyze the implications of negotiating the terms of community partnerships in relation to mutuality. Last, I argue that economic development projects do not always represent high levels of

mutuality. Furthermore, in the last section, I claim that the conflation of mutual benefit with economic development programs can be understood as a mechanism that produces the neoliberal subject.

A. Competitive grants. Acceptance of and active participation in the competitive grant process contributes to the production of the neoliberal subject. Obviously, in the current financial climate, funds associated with the grant process are an essential reality for many university-community partners concerned with civic engagement. Regardless of necessity, the process associated with obtaining grants produces the neoliberal subject. The following subsection examines how forms of neoliberal assessment, outcomes of the grant process, and tacit acceptance of the funding decisions of the neoliberal state produce neoliberal subjects.

1. *The logic of neoliberal assessment.* The competitive grant process forces partnerships to articulate community engagement projects in ways that neoliberalism can define and measure. As a result, neoliberal assessment rubrics manipulate how outcomes of community engagement programs are understood. The competitive grant process coerces community partnerships to speak and think the language of neoliberalism. If community partnerships, understandings of mutuality do not demonstrate market success, conceptions of market efficiency, and an assortment of other neoliberal concepts, they are not likely to receive grant money.

Pierre Bourdieu (1983/1999) created a social and cultural theory that accounted for the ways in which the limited and general fields of production create cultural objects with varying levels of exchange and symbolic value. The general field of cultural production overlaps with traditional capitalist markets. In the general field of cultural production,

cultural goods are created and targeted to the average mean consumer. In the general field of production cultural objects generally have high levels of exchange value and low levels of symbolic value. Community engagement programs with high levels of indirect or direct exchange value are often tied to economic development or addressing community issues solely from an economic perspective (Bourdieu, 1983/1993). In many ways the neoliberal project is designed to support the expansion of the general field of production and increase levels of exchange value.

The limited field of cultural production has higher levels of symbolic value and does not directly translate to exchange value or the general field of cultural production. In a very basic way, symbolic value represents cultural objects and production that have high levels of conceptual meaning or represent an important idea or commitment. Community engagement programs designed to address issues of social justice, increased access, recognition, and representation of marginalized groups often has high levels of symbolic value. The theoretical lens of symbolic and exchange value can explain one tension that is created when organizations attempting to support a civic engagement movement compete for funding dollars. When applying for competitive grants, community engagement organizations must articulate how their proposed plan will produce some combination of symbolic and exchange value. However, because neoliberalism dominates the context of community engagement, activities that support symbolic value quickly lose meaning as they operate within the general field of cultural production and neoliberalism. The bias toward logics of neoliberalism leads to three outcomes for community engagement activities with high levels of symbolic value. First, community engagement activities focused on symbolic value shift to exchange value so they can be recognized in the general

field of cultural production and thereby valued under assessment rubrics of neoliberalism. Second, the symbolic value of the community engagement activity is maintained, but it cannot compete successfully for competitive grants because forms of assessment consistent with neoliberalism fail to register symbolic value in the limited field of production. Third, community engagement activities that cannot shift symbolic value to exchange value are the first programs to be eliminated (Nussbaum, 2010). The language of mutuality and the incentive of the grant money limit partnerships to fit within assessment structures consistent with neoliberalism. Grant proposals that include elements consistent with the general field of production and neoliberalism are favored. As a result, a neoliberal assessment rubric defines success and failure. Grouping and ordering community engagement organizations according to neoliberal measures slowly contribute to the co-optation of the concept of mutuality. Over time, as the logic of neoliberalism sets, understandings of mutuality within community engagement to become almost entirely infused with the logics of neoliberalism and exchange value. The process of understanding mutuality solely in terms of exchange value undermines the civic engagement movement in higher education.

2. Neoliberal outcomes: winners and losers. As indicated in a variety of contexts, the outcomes of neoliberalism tend to concentrate wealth and resources into privileged spaces, organizations, and institutions (Brown, 2005; Harvey, 2005; Pestre, 2009). In community engagement, higher education institutions and community organizations organized most closely to reflect principles and logics of neoliberalism are more likely to receive a disproportionate amount of grant money. Therefore, the constructed meaning of mutuality is oriented disproportionately toward neoliberal-leaning organizations and

institutions. As a consequence, both in theory and in practice, understandings of mutuality are given very specific neoliberal connotations. In other words, the successes of neoliberal institutions and organizations have contributed to specific understandings of mutuality that fit within the framework of neoliberalism.

The consequences of neoliberal rationality's influence on community engagement are compounded as a result. First, organizations favored under the neoliberal regime disproportionately construct meaning around the concept of mutuality. These organizations receive more funds and recognition to pursue community engagement programs. Therefore, the conception of mutuality produced in these types of organizations becomes the dominant understanding across the field. Second, organizations and institutions that aspire to obtain competitive grants must adhere to the dominant neoliberal understandings of mutuality. If an organization desires competitive grants, then they must submit to the parameters created by neoliberalism and community engagement organizations that historically have succeeded in obtaining grant money. As a result, organizations are left with the choice of either submitting to neoliberal standards or not being considered for the competitive grants. The decision to submit to the competitive grant process and attempt to quantify terms of mutuality using logics of neoliberalism produces the neoliberal subject.

Neoliberal organizations and institutions maintain their privilege by receiving a disproportionate amount of grant money and private contributions. The efficiency claims often made by grant process supporters are inconsistent with the systematic outcomes associated with neoliberalism. One line of argument espoused by supporters of the competitive grant process asserts that the merit-based selection process identifies

organizations more likely to use the grant money effectively and efficiently. However, community engagement organizations already arranged in ways consistent with neoliberalism have a competitive advantage in the grant application process. As such, efficiency claims are conflated with organizational structures consistent with neoliberalism. As a result, neoliberal assessment rubrics likely attract and reward organizations structured in ways consistent with neoliberalism as opposed to identifying organizations that will use grant funds the most efficiently. Therefore, the grant process does not necessarily evaluate the elements of efficiency and effectiveness. Instead, the competitive grant process identifies community engagement organizations that support and heed principles of neoliberalism.

Institutions and community organizations vigorously compete for grant dollars and private economic support. The competitive grant process implies that if an organization or partnership desires to be successful, it must govern its conduct by neoliberalism's established rules. Due to historical disadvantage and/or arbitrary circumstances, some organizations will never measure up to neoliberal forms of evaluation. The dominant structures in society reproduce neoliberal outcome in two ways. First, neoliberalism favors historically advantaged institutions with pre-existing traits, and these institutions likely will receive disproportionate amounts of grant money. Second, the neoliberal structure informing the grant process cannot exist without under-achieving organizations (Tallacchini, 2009). The persistent exclusion of under-achieving community engagement organizations naturalizes the governing logic of neoliberalism. Ordering and assessing community engagement organizations produces neoliberal understandings of efficiency, competition, and effectiveness. The competitive grant process disciplines and governs

community engagement organizations to produce policies and programs infused with logics of neoliberalism.

Common assessment rubrics co-opt commitments to mutuality, and mutuality becomes a governing concept that produces neoliberal subjects. Institutions waste resources chasing competitive grants, which they are unlikely to receive because of structural elements associated with neoliberalism. This wasteful process can undermine larger strategic goals of community engagement. Assuming the goal is to build and sustain viable community partnerships through the promotion democratic values, distributing public and grant funding equitably across the field of community engagement is more prudent compared to neoliberal funding schemes.

3. Tacit acceptance of the neoliberal state and public funding decisions. Barry Bozeman (2007) created the concept *publicness* to more accurately categorize public and private organizations. In many cases, contemporary organizations are very rarely completely private or completely public. Bozeman (2007) creates a theory that accounts for varying levels of publicness in public organizations. Organizations with high levels of publicness have accountability mechanisms tied to political systems and are maintained by public authority. Organizations with low levels of publicness are tied to private or semi-private donors and benefactors with low levels of publicness and are generally accountable to private and economic authority. Bozeman's (2007) theory of publicness helps to understand how a system of neoliberal governmentality is limiting the civic engagement movement.

Community partnerships and community engagement organizations that actively acquire private funds from organizations managed by private boards but with public-

oriented vision tacitly accept the state's justified role in underfunding elements of higher education. When larger portions of private money fund public institutions they become less accountable to public authority and supporting the public good. The trade-offs associated with being held accountable to public and economic authorities are nuanced. Normatively, finding a balance between public, semi-public, and private funds might represent the best way to support conceptions of the public good and support the civic engagement movement.

However, finding the appropriate balance between economic and political authority is especially important considering the significance of mutuality in community engagement. If a community partnership is accountable primarily to economic authority and private funding sources, the promotion of the public good, in the context of a mutual relationship, can be limited in scope. Therefore, in situations heavily informed by economic authority, community partnerships can have high levels of mutuality but a low level of public interest that supports the civic engagement movement. Commitments to mutuality can govern and limit the terms of a partnership in order to support very limited neoliberal interest in producing exchange value. In this way, commitments to mutuality in the community engagement process can support and legitimate outcomes of neoliberalism.

V. Implications of Articulating Community Partnerships in Terms of Mutuality

The terms of mutuality are negotiated throughout the community engagement process. This section discusses two ways the negotiation process associated with community engagement and centered on conceptions of mutuality can produce the neoliberal subject.

A. Financial obligations and service fees. Upfront financial commitments in community partnerships can produce neoliberal subjects. When upfront money is part of a university-community partnership the fee frames the relationship from the start in economic terms. The initial financial obligations represent the economic loss associated with leaving the partnership prematurely. As a result, upfront money fails to effectively ensure the quality of a partnership. Instead, the upfront money creates a situation ensuring that the partnership will persist throughout the terms of the agreement. The upfront money represents the perceived economic value of the partnership. Ensuring that partnerships are maintained for duration of the contract connects with the objective standards of assessment valued according the neoliberal evaluation process. Furthermore, connotations of a community engagement practice based on economic obligations under cuts larger commitments to sustaining a civic engagement movement.

B. Joint grant proposals. The success of community partnerships often hinges on the ability to secure funding from competitive grants. The competitive grant process has drawbacks. Some of the drawbacks of the grant process have been previously addressed. However, a partnership's existence often depends on grant money as a required element. Working elements of mutuality into the grant writing process now represents an informal best practice. Conceptions of mutuality that produce the neoliberal subject can inadvertently be written into grant proposals.

The economic and fiduciary obligations created by accepting grant money often determine commitments to mutuality, and the relationship between mutuality and the collaborative grant do not present inherent problems. In reality, grant proposals and the grant process have the potential to represent an effective forum in which to discuss the

terms of a partnership that supports the civic engagement movement. However, the logic of neoliberalism can limit discussions of mutuality in the grant process. An exaggerated focus on outcome, objective standards of assessment, and neoliberal conceptions of efficiency can alter conceptions of mutuality included in the grant process to reinforce commitments to neoliberalism. In other words, when used as a vehicle of partnership negotiation, the joint grant proposal can lead to a relationship limited to the confines of the logic of neoliberalism. As a result, definitions of mutuality included in the grant can bind partners to produce outcomes and outputs that support the potential development of direct or indirect exchange value. Articulating forms of mutuality in relation to exchange value eliminates the possibility of negotiating a partnership defined by producing symbolic value. Neoliberal assessment rubrics used in the grant process only recognizes outcomes of mutuality in terms of exchange value.

C. Mutuality and the presumptions of economic development. In the neoliberal context, partnerships labeled as focused on economic development have a presumed legitimacy that other programs do not. This perceived legitimacy connects with the assumption that economic orientated partnerships represent high levels of mutual benefit between partners. Interestingly, meta-narratives concerning concepts like mutuality and mutual benefit are used to represent the presumed importance of economic development. Tracking the themes of this section, I assert that conflating mutuality and economic development contributes to the creation of a neoliberal subject. Furthermore, because the concepts of mutuality and economic development have been coupled so successfully, partnerships risk focusing on outcomes that directly or indirectly support exchange value

at the expense of symbolic value. Commitments to exchange and symbolic value can undermine the civic engagement movement if not examined closely.

The language of mutuality allows the partnership to avoid larger questions associated with the negotiated limits of the relationship. Goals focused directly or indirectly on producing exchange value are considered decisive while other relevant concerns originating in the limited field of cultural production are not considered. This theoretical miscue can create a partnership that, at its start does not include all relevant concerns and interested stakeholders. In applied terms, this limited concept of mutuality can occur when a group of interested business owners represent the community and partner with a university to improve a blighted downtown and commercial area. In this specific context, in the name of economic development and under the pretense of mutuality, social and political elements that contribute to the blighted area can be neglected. Essentially, important elements that inform community issues are left out because forms of community engagement that produce symbolic value are not included under neoliberal decision making rubrics. In this case, the concept of mutuality is limited to business leaders and the university; nevertheless, in no way do the interests of business owners represent the community at-large. This example demonstrates how commitments to a limited conception of mutuality can provide a community engagement practice that produces neoliberal subject and undermine the civic engagement movement.

VI. Conclusion

The words that administrators and stakeholders use to describe community engagement are significant. In practice, not using the language of mutuality can signal to others a general incompetency associated with the current practices of the field. The same

process that normalizes the significance of mutuality has led it to become void of substantive meaning in a variety of community engagement contexts. The unconscious dilution of the concept of mutuality has attached forms of neoliberal governmentality to the symbolic meaning of the word. Michel Foucault (1970) accurately captured the relationship between power and language:

Having become a dense and consistent historical reality, language forms the locus of tradition, of the unspoken habits of thought, of what lies hidden in a people's mind; it accumulates an ineluctable memory which does not even know itself as memory. Expressing their thoughts in words which they are not the masters, enclosing them in verbal forms whose historical dimensions they are unaware of, men believe that their speech is their servant and do not realize that they are submitting themselves to its demands. (297)

In community engagement, practitioners and stakeholders use mutuality language as if the concept has extreme importance and represents a transcendent form of community engagement. Nevertheless, with every community engagement success story, a case can be cited in which the commitment to mutuality was conceptually empty and used as an unexamined vehicle for forms of neoliberal governmentality. The ways neoliberalism impacts the practice of community engagement needs to be understood in order to sustain an effective civic engagement movement.

The first portion of this article outlined the theoretical aspects of governmentality, neoliberalism, and how the two concepts inform understandings of the production of neoliberal subjects. The chapter concludes by highlighting three common practices of community engagement that operate under the pretense of mutuality but actually produce the neoliberal subject undermining the potential of the civic engagement movement. The rejections of the self and the subsequent substitution of the neoliberal subject do not necessitate significant coercion. The commitments to mutuality can produce the neoliberal subject—at times directly, and at other times, indirectly. Community engagement

administrators and stakeholders should acknowledge the power of language and ensure that concepts used to guide community engagement are theoretically and substantively robust. Without proper considerations, these fundamental concepts can be co-opted and create a life of their own. Community engagement administrators and community partners should avoid structures that co-opt foundational concepts of the practice. Recognizing forms of governmentality represents the space of resistance, the affirmation of community engagement, and the pathway to sustain a meaningful civic engagement movement.

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